Invitation to NRIs for Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas

*47. SHRI YADLAPATIVENKAT RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of NRIs who were issued invitation by Government for first meeting of "PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIWAS" held on the 9th January, 2003 in New Delhi;

(b) the number of NRIs who actually attended the meeting;

(c) whether such meeting of the NRIs would be called every year in future;

(d) whether a permanent Organisation of NRIs has been set up in Delhi under the auspices of Government; and

(e) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) The first Pravasi Bharatiya Divas held from 9-11 January, 2003 was open to NRIs and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) through registration and no invitation was needed to be issued. A few very eminent persons were however invited to address important sessions.

(b) As per the registration details the meeting had a combined presence of NRIs and PIOs totalling 1904.

(c) The Government has accepted the recommendation of the High Level Committee on the Indian Diaspora to celebrate Pravasi Bharatiya Divas every year.

(d) No.

(e) Does not arise.

Self-sufficiency in launching heavier satellites

*48. SHRI RAJU PARMAR:
SHRI BHAGATRAM MANHAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have achieved self-sufficiency in launching heavier satellites;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the National Science Congress is being held in Bangalore and Government have already outlined the steps to be taken for moving towards commercialization of the space operations; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SPACE (SHRI SATYABRATA MOOKHERJEE): (a) and (b) With its operational Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has achieved self-sufficiency in launching Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) satellites of mass 1300 kg class to polar orbit.

A capability to launch 1540 kg into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) has already been demonstrated through the first developmental flight of GSLV. With one more developmental flight, GSLV will be ready to launch operational spacecraft of mass 1800 kg into Geosynchronous Transfer Oribt (GTO).

Government has approved the development of a launch vehicle (GSLV-Mk-lll) for launch heavier satellites of 4 tonne class mass into GTO by 2007-08.

(c) Yes, Sir. The Indian Science Congress was held in Bangalore during January 3-7, 2003. In the Space summit, which was a part of the Indian Science Congress, a presentation was made on the activities relating to commercialisation of space operations through the Antrix Corporation Limited.

(d)The activities of Antrix Corporation Limited include providing launch services to international customers, satellite and subsystems, marketing of remote sensing products with value-added services, Telemetry, Tracking and Command (TTC) support for foreign satellites for initial and on-orbit support and training & consultancy support.

Row between TRAI and private cellphone companies

*50. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
DR.T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state: